



Sikshasandhan

SUSTAINING THE ODDS

2020-21

Annual Report

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Welcome Message

The financial year 2020-2021 will be one the most unforgettable year for everyone. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organisation(WHO) declared Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak a pandemic. The Government of India announced a nationwide lockdown for 21 days on the evening of March 24, 2020, limiting the movement of the entire population (1.38 billion) as a preventive measure against COVID-19. The lockdown and initial restrictions created havoc and confusion in the country. People had to come back to their homes from cities and workplaces with little or no support.

For Sikshasandhan, it was a challenging year as most of our programme activities were severely restricted during the rest of the year. Despite most of the staff testing COVID positive, the team did not lose their spirit.

With the support of Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives, (APPI), Sikshasandhan distributed relief kits (dry ration and soap) to 3750 tribal households in May 2020 in the Muniguda block of Rayagada district. Soon after, Sikshasandhan with support from our partners CRY, TDH-AIEN, Edelgive, KKS and Oxfam, we provided relief support to the community in the Kaptipada, Morada and Suliapada blocks of Mayurbhanj districts.

While the relief work was considerably new for Sikshasandhan, there was great satisfaction as it provided vital support to the distressed community. In addition to the relief support, we also created awareness of health, hygiene and COVID appropriate behaviour. A total of 5000 households were provided with relief support and with Oxfam India's support 1000 households received support in form of direct transfer of money.

As the government schools were closed, the government tried to support the learning of children online. However, the children in our project areas were unreachable due to the non-availability of mobile phones, lack of power supply and low internet

connectivity. Also, children couldn't get the support from their parents needed for remote learning. As soon as the number of COVID-19 cases decreased in our project area, we started interacting with children through our volunteers. Our volunteers conducted activities for children at the village level, though there were some challenges on the ground.

Sikshasandhan also supported a few youth to start small businesses and undertake agriculture who previously migrated and returned during the pandemic to their villages. They were given the required training and handholding support to carry out the activities.

Sikshasandhan could not implement the regular activities of the projects supported by our partners. However, we received much-needed support and cooperation from our partners to change our mode of working to fulfil the objectives of the projects on time. Sikshasandhan is grateful to our Community, Partners, Friends, Governing and General Council Members and our well wishers for their support and cooperation during this crucial time.

Anil Pradhan
Member-Secretary



COVID - 19 RESPONSE

Sikshasandhan stood firm with distressed families during COVID-19 pandemic.

It was unprecedented! Nobody had ever imagined that the world would come to standstill not of any war or natural calamity but of a tiny virus. The COVID-19 pandemic not only sealed the borders of countries, states and cities, but also the very humanity. Governments across the globe were caught unaware and whatever advice and suggestions were coming from the scientific fraternity were followed very stringently.

Towards the end of March 2020, India entered the dark days of complete lockdown almost for a month followed by restrictions on many economic activities. While the poor in the cities lost their livelihood, the poor in the rural areas were deprived of remittances and markets to sell their produce. Anganwadi and schools were closed depriving children of education and more importantly the nutritious Mid-Day Meals.

The children of the rich and middle class could transition into virtual classrooms and had access to online education but the tribal children in remote villages were left from accessing such facilities.



Sikshasandhan has been working with such children and their parents for the last twenty years to support the children in the process of schooling. These efforts faced a serious setback due to the pandemic. But fortunately, with the support of development partners and

generous donors, Sikshasandhan worked on the ground and tried to address the people's immediate essential requirements: food and education. The foot soldiers of Sikshasandhan and a battalion of volunteers reached out to hundreds of families in the remote tribal areas of the Mayurbhanj and Rayagada districts of Odisha.

With the support of Terre Des Hommes-AEIN, Sikshasandhan reached out to 350 families in Adarpada and Mahuldiha villages of Mayurbhanj district with a package of dry rations. Sikshasandhan surveyed Multipurpose Volunteers cum Educators on the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on migrant labourers from Ramachandrapur gram panchayats. The report showed that most of the population was completely ignorant about the symptoms of COVID-19 and the preventive measures to be taken. It also found that 90% of migrant labourers came back to their homes without any wages and around 10% were found to be stationed in their workplaces due to the lockdown. Most of the families had lost their occupations and livelihood. The survey report concluded that the pandemic lockdown and associated measures would have a catastrophic impact on the village economics and education of Ramachandrapur G.P. It also called for immediate measures to address their livelihood challenges by facilitating their re-entry to work.

Dry Ration package

Flattened Rice	5 KG
Dry Pea	2 KG
Semolina	2 KG
Sugar	2 KG
Masoor Dal	2 KG
Biscuit (Big Packet)	4 Packets
Lifebuoy Soap	10 Pc.
Detergent Powder	2 KG

Sikshasandhan and Peoples Cultural Centre supported 35 (Male:30, Female:5) migrant families with the financial help of AEIN (TDH) to improve their livelihood. These migrant families had left behind everything in the cities and reached their villages in a hurry to save their life. But in the village, their parental families were already overburdened with the financial crisis due to the pandemic. At this crucial juncture, Sikshasandhan came forward to support their livelihood. Small initiatives made big results.

The livelihood support not only kept them afloat during the pandemic tsunami, but also secured their future.

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Beneficiary	Investment Cost (Rs.)
1	Fishery - By Sikshasandhan	09	60,270.00
2	Grocery Shop – By PECUC	05	49,772.00
3	Chicken Shop – By PECUC	05	46,865.00
4	NTFP Business – By PECUC	03	25,200.00
5	Vegetable Cultivation– By PECUC	13	104,000.00
Total		35	286,107.00

Edelgive Foundation supported Sikshasandhan for distribution of relief kits in five Gram Panchyats of Kaptipada block of Mayurbhanj district namely Ranipokhari, Kalamgadua, Noto, Saradiha and Ramchandpur. This joint effort between Edelgive Foundation and Sikshasandhan did not stop just with the distribution of food and hygiene kits but extended to psychological counselling.

The activities were as follows

Activity-1: Tribal households were supported with dry food packets and hygiene kits (Hand washing soap, Face Mask, detergent) Sikshasandhan supported 2000 tribal households covering around 12000 population. The kit constituted of the following things-

Total relief materials of worth INR500.00 (INR470.00 material & INR 30 handling charges) was distributed

Sr. No	Item	Amount (In INR)
1.	Face Masks (5 numbers)	100.00
2.	Detergent (1 Kg.)	100.00
3.	Handwashing Soap (10 numbers)	100.00
4.	Biscuit (2 pkts.)	50.00
5.	Flatten Rice (2 k.g.)	80.00
6.	Sugar (1 k.g.)	40.00

Activity-2: Our volunteers counselled individuals and community members to follow the six hand wash techniques of the World Health Organisation and oriented them

on how an individual can contribute to breaking the chain of COVID-19 with these simple regular hand-washing habits.

Activity-3: Psychological counselling of parents to provide moral support to children. Sikshasandhan has a battalion of volunteers who are trained in different skills to support the community in time of need. These volunteers provided counselling services during their home visits.

Activity-4: Promoting behaviour change through poster campaign

Children were encouraged to make Corona Awareness Posters and paste the walls in front of their houses. Anyone passing by their home will notice the poster and thus become better aware.

Activity-5: Awareness generation among communities on physical distancing.

Edelgive Foundation donated relief support to Sikshasandhan for distribution in five Gram Panchyats of Kaptipada block of Mayurbhanj district namely Ranipokhari, Kalamgadia, Noto, Saradiha and Ramchandpur.



Additionally, with the support of Oxfam India in Noto Panchayat of Kaptipada block 500 students were given hand sanitizers and masks. Sikshasandhan selected nine beneficiaries and facilitated the process of cash transfer of INR 9000 towards livelihood support.

Sikshasandhan has been working with one of the most vulnerable tribal groups called Lodha in Morada and Suliapada block of Mayurbhanj, Odisha for the last 3 and half years with the support of Karl Kuben Stiftung (KKS) and The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The Lodha community is a de-notified tribe, which is now classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group. It still carries the stigma of their once-criminal past. They are socially ostracised and live in isolation from other tribes and social groups. Therefore, during any crisis, they had more vulnerable than others. Their sources of income have dried up. The tribals living in villages have run out of money and provisions. The closure of weekly markets and the opening of daily markets for only a few hours a day compounded their problems. These vulnerable groups were not able to sell their farm or forest produce during the lockdown.

In these trying times, Sikshasandhan and KKS extended their support to these tribal households so that they could have sufficient food and other essentials during the lockdown.

The relief materials were distributed to 1130 Lodha households in Morada and Suliapada block of Mayurbhanj district. The list was prepared in consultation with the community and relief materials were purchased following the due financial guidelines. The village-wise list of beneficiaries is given below.

Sl.No.	Village	Beneficiaries	Sl.No.	Village	Beneficiaries
1	Dhobani	91	8	P.C.pur	173
2	Handibhanga	104	9	Godigaon	108
3	Ghodabandha	28	10	Samaidihi	63
4	Chikitamatia	84	11	Bhadrasole	33
5	Sansasole	48	12	Patharnesa	210
6	Nekdagunja	53			
7	Tiansi	135			

Each relief kit was containing with the following items: Detergent- 1kg, Soap- 10 nos, Biscuit- 2Pkts, Flatten Rice-3Kg, Sugar-1kg, Dal-1kg, Mustard oil-1Ltr, Potato-1kg, & Onion-1kg.

The staff of Sikshasandhan distributed relief materials along with Lodha Development Agency (LDA), strictly following physical/social distancing norms. Awareness on the need of maintaining physical distancing, sanitation and hygiene measures to be taken to fight this unprecedented situation was given. Along with the above, information was provided regarding the various entitlements provided by the Government to meet the unprecedented crisis. This also drew the attention of the local government officials regarding the problems community was facing due to the lockdown.

Deep inside southern Odisha, the impact of COVID-19 was more severe. Sikshasandhan reached the unreachable Niyamgiri Hill range with humanitarian support. Dry food kits (dry food items) were distributed to 3530 tribal households of 14 GPs of the Block including migrant labours, landless workers, and NTFP (Non-timber forest product) dependents families.

Keeping in view the growing outspread of the Corona pandemic Siskshasandhan distributed hand washing soaps and face masks to 3750 households including PVTG (Particularly Vulnerable Group) of Niyamgiri hilltops of Muniguda Block.

Distribution of Covid19 Safety Materials to Frontline Warriors :

Block-level launching programme on the distribution of the Personal Protection Kit to all frontline warriors was organised, Dr. Dilip Ku. Behera, BDO, Muniguda, Rayagada presided over the meeting. Participants from the ICDS unit of Muniguda and Mission Shakti, Health & Family Welfare, Social Activist, PRI Member, Print and Electronic Media, APPI and Sikshasandhan team members participated in the programme.

Personal Protection Kits were distributed to all Anganwadi helpers (137), ASHAs (189), AWWs (176), ANMs, Male health workers (9) and ICDS Sector Supervisor (07) of Muniguda Block. The Protection kit contained Face Shield (2 Pcs), Mask (6 Pcs), Sanitizers (4 Bottle), Soap (6 Pcs) and hand gloves (6 Pcs).

The beneficiaries were doctors, paramedics, police personnel and even journalists, whose work was tremendous in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic.



The lockdown period was a very difficult period for the children as well as for their parents. With the support of CRY, Sikshasandhan provided materials like toys, TLMs etc to keep the children engaged during their stay-at-home period. The parents and the community were very happy and lauded the effort. CRY also supported the distribution of food materials to the families of children, who were part of the Sikshasandhan education centres.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be long-lasting and the loss it caused to the economy and education of tribal children will be difficult to repair. But consistent and intensive participatory interventions will bring some results.

Sikshasandhan could reach out to vulnerable families and children, as our partners were with us, supporting us technically and financially.



RESHAPING LIFE

After August 2020, with the decrease in the number of cases, lockdown restrictions were relaxed by the government. Work and businesses slowly started to resume. But schools did not open fearing the pandemic. Children in private schools had access to online classes. Though the government tried its best to start classes through public broadcasts and the web. Most of the families and their children in the tribal areas did not have access to the internet and TV. This created a huge digital divide among children of different regions and different classes.

Sikshasandhan with the help of its donors tried to reach out to the children and parents maintaining all the COVID-19 protocols. The project-wise activities are presented in the following sections.

Padapustee Karyakram Muniguda, Rayagada District Support: Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives

Pada Pusti Karyakram is a special programme designed and implemented by APPI and Shikshasandhan to provide nutrition services in remote and hard-to-reach hamlets which do not have have Anganwadis and/or located far away from the main Anganwadi Centers. (Tagged villages). The following are the activities of the programme:

Spot Feeding of Morning Snacks and Hot Cooked Meal to children aged 3-6 years is provided in a decentralised manner through community participation. Mother Groups voluntarily cook and feed children in the hamlet itself.



Providing nutritious food to pregnant and lactating mother is a challenging task basically in tribal pockets of the state. During the COVID-19 lockdown, spot feeding and hot cook meal arrangement was stopped. Dry ration distribution was initiated following the COVID-19 Guidelines covering Pregnant Mothers, Lactating Mothers and children in the age group of 6 months to 3 years. AWWs distributed the ration in an open place which was convenient to the beneficiaries. The workers of Sikshasandhan supported ICDS functionaries in this process. With the relaxation of lock down, spot feeding activities started in 93 hamlet villages out of 120 hamlet villages. Seating materials were distributed to 120 hamlet villages, where children could sit together for feeding. This program covered 137 pregnant mothers, 189 lactating mothers, 846 numbers of children (7 months to 3 years age) and 799 numbers of children (3 to 6 year age) till April 2021.

After COVID-19 lockdown was relaxed, Sikshasandhan supported beneficiaries with rice, dal, egg, soya chunks, cooking oil, potato, onion, turmeric powder, chilly powder and salt and set up provision of hot cook meal. 58 lactating and pregnant mothers were covered in 8 gram panchayats.



Consultation meeting with mothers group: Mothers group members of different villages shared their experiences among themselves. Mothers group not only shared their success stories, but also shared their challenges.

A cross learning training of was conducted where mother groups from different villages participated and shared their experiences.

Growth monitoring of children is done once a month in the hamlet with active participation of mothers.



The focus is to provide counselling for improvement of Orange and Yellow Zone children. Mothers are the primary caregivers of children. Despite progress, sub optimal feeding practices and under nutrition particularly in the form of stunting still remains a major issue among children below 5 years of age. Since mothers are the primary caregivers of young children, maternal nutrition counselling can be effective in improving knowledge and practices on child feeding. Around 65 mothers in the project area of Muniguda block. During the counselling the ICDS Supervisors and Anganwadi Workers shared their cooperation to convince the mothers regarding feeding practices, cleanness, preparation of food, best practices of health and hygiene, safe drinking water etc.

Ojana Uchhaba - Community based growth Monitoring: It has been observed that there is widespread maternal malnutrition leading to high prevalence of low birth weight infants and very high maternal mortality basically in tribal pockets of the state. Keeping in view these basic objectives Ojana Uchhaba was organised in Tabhapadar, Panchubai, Kujing, Solagudi hamlet villages under PPK.

Pre- School Activities:

Preschool activities are essential for the active and healthy development of the children. In this context, kits were distributed to 40 mothers' group. The Kit contains different types of toys, colour boxes, brushes and puzzles. Additionally, mat, plastic buckets, water glasses, sanitizer,



hand wash soaps, towels etc. were also provided. As the children are inclined to story books, bilingual multi coloured story books were developed for them. The facilitators of Sikshasandhan organized the ECEC activities time to time for the children of this hamlet villages above 325 children have been joined the respective activities. They also mobilized the mothers to be involved in story telling also.

Early childhood education prepares children for school education and helps accelerate the process of universalization of education. Pre-school education lays the foundation for later education and personal success. Mothers who work will be able to continue their work as children are left in a safe environment in the center. Similarly, elder siblings are freed from child care to attend schools.



Winter blanket for pregnant women and new born Babies:

Around 250 blankets were given to the tribal communities of Raghubari, Dimiriguda and Munikhol GPs of Muniguda Block. Priority was given to the pregnant women and their babies of these tribal pockets as most of the tribal family are not able to provide their children and mothers appropriate warm clothes in this region.



Child feeding and learning centre: Mo Ghara: Our strategy was development of School buildings (Closed School) as Child Feeding and learning centres called Mo Ghar (my home). Necessary care and proper attention was given to each of those admitted children. The centre was used both for learning and nutritional habits of the beneficiaries. Protection will be given to each of those respective children. Approved nutritious food was given. Four closed school i.e Panchubai, Garlagudi, Turukupa and Upper Selma were developed as Mo Ghar.

Winter dress distribution to all hamlet villages: The workers of Sikshasandhan collaborated with the AWWs and Supervisors for distribution of winter clothes in different Anganwadi Centres of PPK. They mobilised parents to go the AWW with their kids during the specified date to receive the materials . All hamlet villages of PPK were covered under this programme .

Process documentation and Evaluation: A process documentation and evaluation team was conducted by APPI towards the end of the project to understand and assess the progress made, lessons learnt challenges and way forward. A few insights shared by the team:

- The PPK model has successfully addressed one of the most crucial challenges of ensuring the last mile delivery of nutrition to one of the most impoverished and under-nourished populations in the state.
- PPK is characterized by simple, yet workable interventions, eliciting community participation through heightened awareness and action by mothers.
- The fact that the state has adopted this model in principle is a testimony to the relevance and excellence of the model.

**Reducing Inequality in India
Noto, Mayurbhanj District
Support: Oxfam Hong Kong
Oxfam India (Implementing Affiliate)**

This programme was implemented in Noto Panchayat of Kaptipada block. The programme aimed at working with various groups of the society to sensitise them about the inequalities and to take measures to address it. The following are the primary activities of the project:

Meetings and capacity building of FIA alliance and RTE network on addressing rising inequality and shrinking civic space: FIA web meetings were organised to discuss the issue of School Closure with participation of representatives from civil society organisations, Academicians, and educationist. An action plan to advocate stopping closure of schools was developed during the meetings. Both the meetings were attended by 40 participants and 38 numbers of participants respectively.

Orientation of youth on inequality in education: In the wake of Covid-19, 45 Youth from Mayurbhanj were engaged in creating awareness regarding safety norms amongst children. The Youth leaders also distributed Masks and Sanitizers to 500 school children.



were divided into groups and detailed discussion was done theme-wise from the report. The youth orientation programme was attended by 262 College and university students (137 girls and 125 boys)

Youth mobilization on inequality in education: Members of Youth forums were oriented on Inequality in Education. The training helped them develop their understanding on the adverse effects of inequality. One of the major points of discussion has been around COVID-19 and its impact on the lives and education of the children in the field area and what role could youth play in ensuring continuing education for children from marginalised sections.

A training module on Understanding Inequality in Education was developed to work with the youth.

In addition to the above, 4 meetings were organised in Mayurbhanj with the Youth Groups and RTE cadres and a rally was conducted spread awareness across the Panchayat on inequality in education and discriminations. Since schools were closed due to pandemic and children had returned to their homes, they were engaged with the existing Youth Groups to spread awareness about child marriage, conducting remedial classes for smaller children, grievance submission and raising voice against school closure.

26 mobilisation meetings were organised on school closure, ECCE, ensuring rights of the children in getting access to basic rights, mid-day meal, and how to ensure children's education during COVID-19 covering all villages in Noto Panchayat with Parents, PRI members, Anganwadi Workers and Teachers. The project team has shared the existing case studies of inequality of the villages and explained rights of children to free and compulsory education, government schemes and importance of people's participation. These meetings created opportunities for mothers, care givers and gate keepers to demand their rights. 699 (569 male & 130 female) people were covered in these meetings.

As per the Government's earlier school closure notice, two schools i.e. Bandhasahi and Sahar Sahi schools were ordered to be closed. Grievance was submitted to District Collector, BDO, BEO and Sarpanch by the SMC Members for not closing the schools. After the revised school closer notice of the Government, one school i.e. at

Bandha Sahi with less than 15 enrolment was closed and the children in that school were enrolled in the nearby Haldia Sahi Upper Primary school. The Sahar Sahi School will remain open as per the revised Government Guideline.

Another Grievance was submitted to the Tahsildar for construction of permanent bridge to Hudi Sahi School. However, no action has been undertaken due to Covid 19. Recently the SMC Members once again met the Tahsildar. Taking cognizance of the complaint, he has assured that the task of the construction of permanent bridge will be completed soon so that the children of the school can continue their education without any disturbance.

20 village level meetings were conducted on Community Score Card to analyze Entitlement of School/AWC Facilities, Marking on Availability of School/ AWC Facilities, RTE Compliances and Voice Raised and Grievances submission. The community score card discussion was done with 413 (261 male & 152 female) people from 17 hamlet villages.

The project supported 228 HO tribal children on quality education through its direct intervention in two schools of Kaptipada block of Mayurbhanj district. With its community level approach 1235 children were benefitted. Bi-lingual graded materials for children, teachers training on different pedagogic skills were developed. Creative workshops for children, peer engagement in mainstreaming children to schools, evaluating learnings of children attending the class and reinforcing improvement through remediation were some of the major interventions under the project. The process also strengthened capacities of existing school teachers who did not had adequate knowledge on mother tongue-based teaching and learning skills.





**Campaign to Ensure Right to Education of Children
Ramchandrapur, Mayurbhanj District.
Support: Terre des hommes-AEIN**

The primary purpose of the project was to ensure the rights of women & children belonging to Adivasi & Dalit families of 32 villages in 2 districts of Odisha. The objectives are to ensure the right to education for all children in target communities in line with the RTE Act in a process involving the participation of stakeholders, duty bearers and children. The second objective is to ensure women's empowerment

through the strengthening of women's groups, sensitizing women and men on gender roles and developing mechanisms for women's access to economic sustenance.

The following were the activities conducted to fulfil the objectives of the programme:

Education Support Centres: Sikshasandhan continued its already initiated 7 education support centres which were functioning at the local school premises where 948 children (492 boys and 456 girls) were learning. Seven (M-4, F-3) educated tribal youth from Kolha (HO) tribe were selected as Multipurpose volunteers cum Educators and they supported the teaching process in 7 government schools from class 1 to 3 children.

Due to the lockdown, the volunteers operated the classroom transactions during morning hours assisting the school children in the local language.

Teaching Learning Materials: Various teaching learning and other supportive materials were supplied to the schools. The materials were - picture cards, Daily Notebooks, White paper, Drawing sheets, Colour Pencils, Sketch pens, Gums etc.



Training of Multipurpose Volunteers / Educators on Integrated (Language, Math & environment) teaching methods for the children of class- 1 to 3 and preparation of contextual teaching learning materials The volunteers prepare lesson plans and maintain a daily diary. They also submit their Monthly Progress

Reports in monthly review cum planning meetings regarding children's attendance and other curricular activities they have done in the month.

Organizing regular learning level assessments for children: The Multipurpose volunteers cum educator at 7 schools have been conducting regular learning assessments of 563 children (Boys -298, Girls -265) for Classes 1 to 3 on language,

Math and Environment. Due to the lockdown regular assessment was not possible for all the children. Children learning profiles have been also developed and are being maintained.

Strengthening Child rights clubs/Sishu Samiti: It was felt in the course of project intervention to strengthen children's voices so that they can actively participate in different project activities. 12 Children's Clubs were founded and are functional with 122 (57 boys and 65 girls) children. These child clubs usually hold a meeting once a month and in reporting period 64 meetings have been held with the participation of 759 children.

Training to Child Rights Club members: Training for Child Rights Club Members was organised covering topics of child rights, child protection and the pertaining violations. The available laws and schemes and the process of the grievance mechanism were discussed.

Annual event for Children: The objective of the Annual event is to provide a platform for the children to exhibit their talent and abilities in arts and sports. It also helps in motivating out-of-school children to go back to school. This festival provides scope for the children to enjoy and participate in extracurricular activities.

Training for Government School Teachers on Bilingual Language Transaction: The main focus of the training was on mother tongue-based education and the National Education Policy (NEP 2020).

Training to ICDS Workers:

The main purpose of the training was to build the capacities of ICDS Workers on joyful learning methodologies for pre-School children taking into account local sensibilities and contexts.



Strengthening of Anganwadi Jaanch Committees: In the process of strengthening decentralization, the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) has promoted Jaanch (each group – 6 Members – Male -3/Female-3) committee at the village level. The role of the Jaanch committee is to ensure that all the feeding programs maintain prescribed quality and quantity.

Strengthening of School Management Committees: During the year **103** numbers of meetings were organized with the parents & villagers. The major discussion points of the meetings are regular attendance, dropout, retention and continuation of children in school. In addition to this community-level advocacy initiatives for compliance with RTE norms like provision of the additional classroom, tube well, separate toilet for girls, playground ownership and repair of school.

Training of SMC Members: The main objective of the training was to build the capacity of SMC members on School Development Plan and to make them understand their roles and responsibilities, especially for community monitoring and school tracking.

Assessment of RTE compliance in schools and Anganwadi centres: An assessment was conducted in the project area to understand the status of RTE compliance in schools and to know the functioning of Anganwadis.

Strengthening of Mothers /Women associations: To sensitise and build the capacity of the Mothers committee, a village-level meeting programme was conducted. In the meeting, some of the topics discussed were the importance of pre-school, school attendance, regular visits, home visits by AWC, monitoring THR-Immunization-Sanitation, advocacy initiatives by the villagers to fulfil provisions of ICDS, and the importance of girl child education.

Awareness Campaigns were held in the project villages through street plays and cultural folklore.

Training to VLCPC & PRI Members: The objective of the training programmes was to empower VLCPCs and PRI members on their role and responsibility in the context of child protection - so that they are equipped to work on child protection issues like child abuse, child labour and all kinds of child violence.

Strengthening Village Advocacy groups: Advocacy groups were formed with 10 members in each group (Teacher, School Cabinet representative, Asha, ICDS Worker, SMC, one progressive parent, Ward members and one member from the Youth group and one member from SHG). It was formed with objectives to identify the issues and challenges schools in the project area are facing problems and to initiate advocacy on the same.

Block Level Advocacy Workshops: were conducted to facilitate discussions on RTE Act and to take stock of its implementation at the block level. The learnings were consolidated and presented at the district level.

District Level Advocacy Workshops: A district-level advocacy workshop was organised with the primary objective of sharing the experiences and challenges of NGOs working on education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The implementation of the RTE Act, the status of pre-primary education and the closing down of schools by the government was discussed.

Tribal Literature Festival: The main objective of the festival is to promote tribal culture and instil pride in the children of their identity and literature. Moreover, it is important

to encourage tribal communities to preserve their language and literature. Tribal communities from Odisha and Jharkhand displayed their talents through music, songs, story and dance.

Training to Youth Network Members on Ecology, Sustainable Development: The objective of the training programme was to raise awareness of the Ecosavers on issues relating to the environment and ecology.

Strengthening youth groups and life skills for the groups: Youth groups have been formed in the project villages to encourage youth to work for sustainable development and ecology. They are now active in taking up issues of forest protection and working towards stopping illegal tree cutting, burning and selling of firewood. The youth were also trained in life skills.



**Innovating Quality Education in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha
Ramchandrapur, Kalamgadia, Ranipokhari, Saradiha, Noto-Mayurbhanj District.
Support: Edelgive Foundation**

The children in the project areas do not have access to the required infrastructures for running a distance learning system. They face a double burden of lack of quality education in schools under normal conditions and now a long school closure. This prolonged school closure may again engage them in some economic activity to share the family burden and resulting in dropping out of school.

We have initiated the following activities to overcome these challenges:

- To provide psychological and moral support to parents
- To address the children’s psychological and mental well-being by keeping them engaged and motivated in their respective homes.
- To keep the children in the loop of the schools by ensuring their contact with the teachers.
- To facilitate plugging the gaps in the delivery of nutritional entitlements.
- To facilitate the distribution of books and study materials to the children at their doorsteps.

This helped engage the children during the lockdown as well as reduce the psychological stress of parents whose livelihoods have been severely affected by the sudden uncertain lockdown.

Promotion of Self Study:



Children were engaged for a few hours a day under the direct supervision of parents to minimise the learning gap children due to school closure. The parents were motivated and encouraged to speak with their

children about their learning and area of interest. The outreach workers played a pivotal role, by interacting with parents during home visits about their well-being, health condition and their children's learning.

We reached out to approximately 1100 school children and 343 Preschool children directly and nearly 500 children outside the intervention area indirectly.

Engaging Children with various fun-filled activities:

To address children's psychological and mental well-being of children by keeping them engaged and motivated in their respective homes, the children were given some weekly assignments and the tasks were delivered to their doorstep by the outreach workers during their home visits.

The children took the help of parents, grandparents and other family members to complete the assignments. It helped create bonding within the family in times of uncertainty. The activities received tremendous responses from the parent's circle as well as from government machinery.

Promoting behaviour change in hygiene practices: To encourage individuals and the community to adopt the best hygiene and sanitation practices, intensive orientation and awareness were in a small group.

Our outreach workers covered near 800 households, reaching around 4000 people during this activity

Promoting behaviour change through poster competition: School children and youth were encouraged to make posters on COVID-19 awareness and paste the posters on the walls of houses so that a passer-by can easily see that. Around 200 school children and 50 youths were involved in the poster-making activity. It was primarily designed to create awareness among people.

Handicrafts: Mayurbhanj tribal communities have the art and skill of making useful handicraft products like sitting mats, brooms, baskets from grass and leaves of plants. But the current generation of children does not show much interest in learning these skills. For motivating the children toward their tribal art and crafts, rural craftsmen were encouraged to demonstrate the handicraft skills before children so that they can learn

the skill. Parents were also involved in the craft-making activity. Parents actively guided and encouraged the children.

Children made sitting mats, spectacles, caps, baskets and brooms from the palm leaves. About 550 children, 50 youths, 20 outreach workers and 150 mothers were involved in the activity.

Mud work: To encourage creativity and to use fine and gross motor skills, children of both schools and Anganwadi centres were engaged in mud work activities for making beautiful pottery, and toys and showing their creative skills. About 1500 children of different age groups from 3-16 years took part in the activity. They made various things with the help of their parents.

Counselling of Parents: The primary interface with the children is their parents, who were going through uncertainty and anxiety. Many studies showed that such anxiety at the parents' level leads to domestic violence.

Our community volunteers are oriented to counsel the parents who were stressed and depressed. They conducted healthy discussions with parents on COVID-19 precautions and kept a vigil on domestic violence cases.



Hamlet-based Education through

Learning Centres: As part of confidence-building measures in the community the project team visited every village, consulted the parents and discussed how to conduct classes in hamlets so that the learning loss due to school closure could be minimised. Parents were worried about

it as they did not have any resources to access online education. Moreover, in many villages, there is no proper power supply. They agreed to help in finding a safe place and to necessary arrangements with the community. Nearby safe places like unused buildings and verandas were selected by the parents for opening learning centres for

school children. COVID-19 protocols were mandatory for both the children and teachers.

These learning centres were started by the Outreach volunteers in the last week of June, while the lockdown restrictions were eased. While focusing on learning, the centres also inculcated habits like regular hand washing and proper toilet use. The children went back home and insisted their parents and other family members follow the same. Later on, the parents were invited to visit the centres and assess their children's efforts and progress. Parents appreciated the efforts as their children's learning levels improved.

Hamlet based Pre-Primary Education: Since the beginning of the lockdown due to COVID-19, Anganwadi centres were closed as safety precautions and dry ration was provided to the child's family by the Anganwadi worker. The project's outreach volunteers visited around 5-6 hamlets daily and met the mothers and AWC. Discussions were initiated with the mothers about running the centres in hamlets to support early childhood education (ECE) so that children can be better engaged. They identified safe places for opening ECE centres and regularly visited the centres and encouraged the children to get involved in ECE activities.

A total of 31 centres were operated and 337 preschool children attended the centres. 45 children who could not visit the centres were covered by home visits

In addition to the above activities, children were encouraged to celebrate a few special days in their schools and community. This will help children understand the importance of a certain day and also encourage them to commemorate the significance of the day.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous People, August 9th: The objective was to promote and protect the rights of the world's indigenous peoples which has a lot of significance in our project areas. On this day tribal children were told the great stories of their community, their contribution to environmental protection, and their rich language and culture.

National Sports Day, August, 30th: To emphasize the importance of sports in student's life this day is celebrated on the birthday of Hockey Legend Maj. Dhyanchand. A sense of responsibility, working towards a common objective, collaborating, fostering

dialogue, mutual appreciation, empowerment, and leadership are a few of the skills that can be developed by sports. Children participated in various sports like running, swimming, fishing etc to celebrate the day.

Teachers' Day Celebration, September 5th: Teachers' Day Celebration was planned to celebrate and acknowledge the contribution of teachers. The community members and children helped organise the celebration to applaud and encourage the teachers for their efforts and hard work.

International Literacy Day celebration, September 8th: On 8th September, international literacy was celebrated in the learning centres. The objective of the celebration was to promote the importance of literacy for individuals, communities and societies. This year's theme was Literacy teaching and learning in the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

Teachers' Training on Joyful learning: Training and development of teachers are very crucial so that they can equip themselves to teach better and build new skills. Quarterly training was incorporated into the project plan to attain the objective of upgrading the skills of government teachers, and project staff in thematic areas and leadership development.

Early Childhood Education Training cum Workshop: Two-day training program on Early Childhood Education was organised for Anganwadi workers and project outreach volunteers on early childhood education and the importance of joyful learning.



**Nabadiganta- New Horizon for the Lodha Community
Morada, Suliapada, Mayurbhanj District.
Support: Karl Kübel Stiftung**

The project was implemented with the overall objective of social inclusion of the Lodha tribe, where they can assert their social, economic, political and children's rights. The focus of the project was on 714 children and 100 youth of the Lodha community residing in 12 villages of Morada and Suliapada blocks of Mayurbhanj district.

Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, most of the regular activities were paused. Since all the schools and AWCs were closed, the education of Lodha children suffered this year. Sikshasandhan tried to continue the learning process of the children by conducting morning classes at the village level.

With the support of KKS, relief support was extended to the Lodha community. All 1130 households of the project were given relief kits.

The project also focused on the livelihood security of families. Skill training on tailoring, Sabai handicraft and driving was provided.

Many children in the higher age group had requested to be a part of tailoring training with a promise not to neglect their studies. Many college-going girls had taken tailoring training and now are providing tailoring services in their villages. By the time the colleges reopened, the training was completed. Now they attend college in the morning and do tailoring in the evening.



Success story

Musula, is a 19-year-old boy who lives with his two brothers. The brothers live with their uncle as their father is no more. After his father's death, his mother left them and married another person. Musula dropped out after class VIII and worked as a seasonal labourer. He used to go out of the District for labour work in the paddy field. He migrated to Gujurat to do marble work.

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he had to come back home. As there was no labour work and Musula and his brothers have to face so many problems for their livelihood. During the same time, the community volunteers of Sikshasandhan met Musula. They told him about the income-generating activity of Sikshasandhan. Musula was interested to start a business. He contributed Rs.2000/- and Sikshasandhan supported Rs.11070/-. With an amount of Rs.13070/-, Musula started a betel shop in his village and was able to earn 250 to 300 rupees per day and make a profit of 2000 to 2500 rupees in a month.

Out of his profit, he saved Rs.5000/- and constructed a new shop at the roadside on his own. He has shifted his shop to the new location and started selling more items like dry fish etc. Musula is very happy with his new business and wants to save more money so that he could extend his shop. He now says that he will stay in his village and grow his business. He will not migrate again.

The KKS team during their project visit in December 2020, suggested marketing Sabai Handicrafts, and insurance for the livestock. The suggestions were incorporated into the project.

The project promoted sports especially football among the youth to enhance leadership qualities and integrate them with the larger society. Before the project, youth from the Lodha community were not accepted to football teams managed by other communities. However, when Lodha youths formed their groups and played football matches, they were invited to play with other teams. This is the major step

toward the inclusion of the Lodha community in the larger society. The inter-community relationship has also increased.

Similarly, Sikshasandhan has formed a cultural group of women. Women are arranging cultural programs and perform cultural activities. As a result, they also participated in the state-level tribal festivals organised by the Government of Odisha..



**Education and care of tribal children
Ranipokhari, Mayurbhanj District
Support: Child Rights and You - America
Child Rights and You - India**

The objective of the project was to ensure 100% enrolment and 100% retention. The project also seeks to track the implementation of the milestones of the RTE act. Sikshasandhan's recommendation on quality parameters (Infrastructure, learning outcome) formulated, ensuring child participation, ECCE and Child opinion and their participation recognized by family, community, teacher and SMC were incorporated in the project.

CRY supported extensively relief work during the pandemic. In addition, to this, the following activities were carried out during the window of relaxation between two lockdowns.



Village meetings were organised in 28 villages in the project area where 746 parents, ward members, school management committee members and other community people participated in a discussion on the topic of children's regular attendance in school.

A special discussion was also held to send recommendations by Pallisabha to

the Gramasabha regarding school infrastructure facilities like a classroom, boundary wall, school gate, construction of an additional classroom, electricity connection to school and separate toilet construction and discussion on lockdown of the village.

Around 20 meetings were organised, where 286 women, mothers and Janch committee members took part in discussions on immunization, personal health care of self and children, SNP, Institutional delivery, VHND, and updating Adhaar of

children. Opening a bank passbook to receive benefits under the Mamata scheme. The discussion was also held to collect children's birth certificates from Asha workers.

Around 43 meetings were organised with 21 club members, of which 1192 child club members participated in discussions. In the meeting, discussions were held on the topics of life skills, child labour, and child abuse.

A campaign 'Say no to Child marriage' was organised in the community. The objective of the campaign was to build youth and adolescents as agents for change to bring a transformation in the social mindset that sees marriage as the only avenue for personal and social fulfilment for children especially girls and young women, The campaign seeks to spread awareness that child marriage adversely affects both and girls.

Morning classes were organised in the month of February 2021 for accelerated learning of children, since the schools were not open.



Publications

Publication of books (primarily in Odia) related to education, and social change, as well as autobiographies are another major work of Sikshasandhan. The aim of these publications has been to strengthen the vernacular public domain, and facilitate the exchange of ideas and debates regarding education in Odisha. Till date hundreds of books have been published. These have been extensively reviewed in the Odia language press, thus fulfilling the mandate of creating a public debate on the issues raised in the books.

Care has been taken to distribute the books all across the state in a professional manner, and the organisation has participated in book fairs in Bhubaneswar. The response to the organisation's publications has been encouraging with many of the books going into multiple editions, which is relatively rare in the Odia publication industry. The following books have been published in the year 2020-21.

- *Aga Katha Age* by Aurobindo Behera
- *Jibana patra Mora, Bharichi kete mote* by Basanta Kumar Pal
- *Bibidha Prasanga* by Mohini Mohan Senapati
- *Bigyan pain Prastuti* by R. B. Grage.
- *Bana Mali ra Atmalipi* by Jemamani Devi.
- *Contours of my Life* by Priyambada Mohanty Hejmadi.

Apart from these books the organisation has also reprinted its publication of books for children.



Conclusion

In twenty-five years of existence of Sikshasandhan, this year was the most challenging. Along with the rest of the world and communities, we faced the pandemic with our vast team of professionals, staff and volunteers. We stayed on the ground with our communities and tried to respond immediately to the situation on the ground. Humanitarian aid to the community, in form of relief kits, was given. Even though Sikshasandhan did not have the experience earlier, we carried out the work meticulously without many hurdles due to the dedication of our team, cooperation of the community and support from our donors.

As soon as things started to improve, our focus was on education and supporting the children to recover from the learning losses. However, due to the diversion of funds to immediate humanitarian causes, many of the regular activities were affected but this did not deter the spirit of the organisation.

**SIKSHASANDHAN, ND-7,VIP AREA,IRC VILLAGE,BHUBANESWAR-751015,ORISSA
CONSOLIDATED INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021**

<u>INCOME</u>	AMOUNT(Rs)
Grant in aid	2,27,69,058.00
Bank Interest	1,51,137.00
Printing & Sale of own publication	16,91,229.00
Other Revenue	1,90,765.00
Donation	6,88,430.00
TOTAL	2,64,90,175.00
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Programme Expenses	1,72,83,408.00
(Training /Meeting / workshop for Child Rights. Development of Lodha Community, Campaigning to ensure the rights of Children on Rte Act. Increase knowledge and Capacity building of SMC, PRI. Pad Pusti Karyakrama. Insure Quality Primary Education to Tribal Children)	
Administrative & other Overhead Expenses	30,22,755.00
COVID-19 Relief Expenses	56,71,070.00
TOTAL	2,59,77,233.00
Surplus/(Deficit) Before Depreciation	5,12,942.00
Less Depreciation	14,38,484.00
SURPLUS/ DEFICIT after Depreciation	(9,25,542.00)
TOTAL	2,64,90,175.00

SIKSHASANDHAN, ND-7,VIP AREA,IRC VILLAGE,BHUBANESWAR-751015,ORISSA
CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

AS ON 31ST MARCH 2021

SOURCES OF FUND	AMOUNT(Rs)
CAPITAL FUND:	22,040,963.6
Less : Excess of Expenditure over Income	1,293,627.3
Project fund :	
Opening Balance	
Brought Forward from Capital Fund	(1,586,715.59)
Add: Grant Received in FY 2020-21	21,046,644.3
	19,459,928.7
Less: Grant Utilized in FY 2020-21	22,769,058.6
Current Liabilities: (Schedule -A)	1,672,972.5
TOTAL	1,91,11,178.9
APPLICATION OF FUND	
Fixed Assets: (Schedule -B)	
Opening Balance	13,406,944.89
Add-during the year	0.00 -
	13,406,944.89
Less : Depreciation	1,438,484.08
	11,968,460.81
Loan and Advances: (Schedule -C)	4,023,807.54
Closing Balance: (Schedule D)	3,118,910.58
TOTAL	1.91,11,178.93

NOTES TO ACCOUNTS (Schedule-E)

(1) SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

A. SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTING

1. The accounts are prepared under the Historic cost Convention on Accrual Basis in general.
2. The accountings are prepared and presented on the principles applicable to a going concern.
3. Foreign Grants are accounted for on the basis of actual Indian Rupees amount credited by the Foreign Contribution (F.C) bank account.
4. As far as practicable the organization follows the mercantile system of accounting recognizing income and expenditure on accrual basis. Whenever grant utilized is not allowed by funding agency, the same is written off to income and expenditure accounts in the year of such disallowance.
5. Project funds restricted by outside agencies under the terms of contract are recorded as contract liabilities and to the extent they are utilized during the year are only recognized as income of the year.
6. Materials/ service received free of cost are accounted for on the basis of the information about rupees equivalent to the same provided by the Funder/Donor.
7. Contingent liability, if any is shown by way of note to the accounts.

B. DEPRECIATION

Depreciation is being provided on the basis of W.D.V method to the assets belongs to the General fund and FC Fund.

C. STOCK VALUATION

All materials purchased are treated as utilization of fund.

D. ITEM CONSIDERED ON CASH BASIS

Grants, donations, contribution, and miscellaneous receipts are accounted for on a cash basis.

E. Previous year figures are regrouped and rearranged wherever necessary to make them comparable with the current year's figures.

F. FIXED ASSETS ACCOUNTING

Fixed assets purchased out of project funds are capitalized only when the same is not encumbered by any stipulation of the project Donors.



Sikshasandhan

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